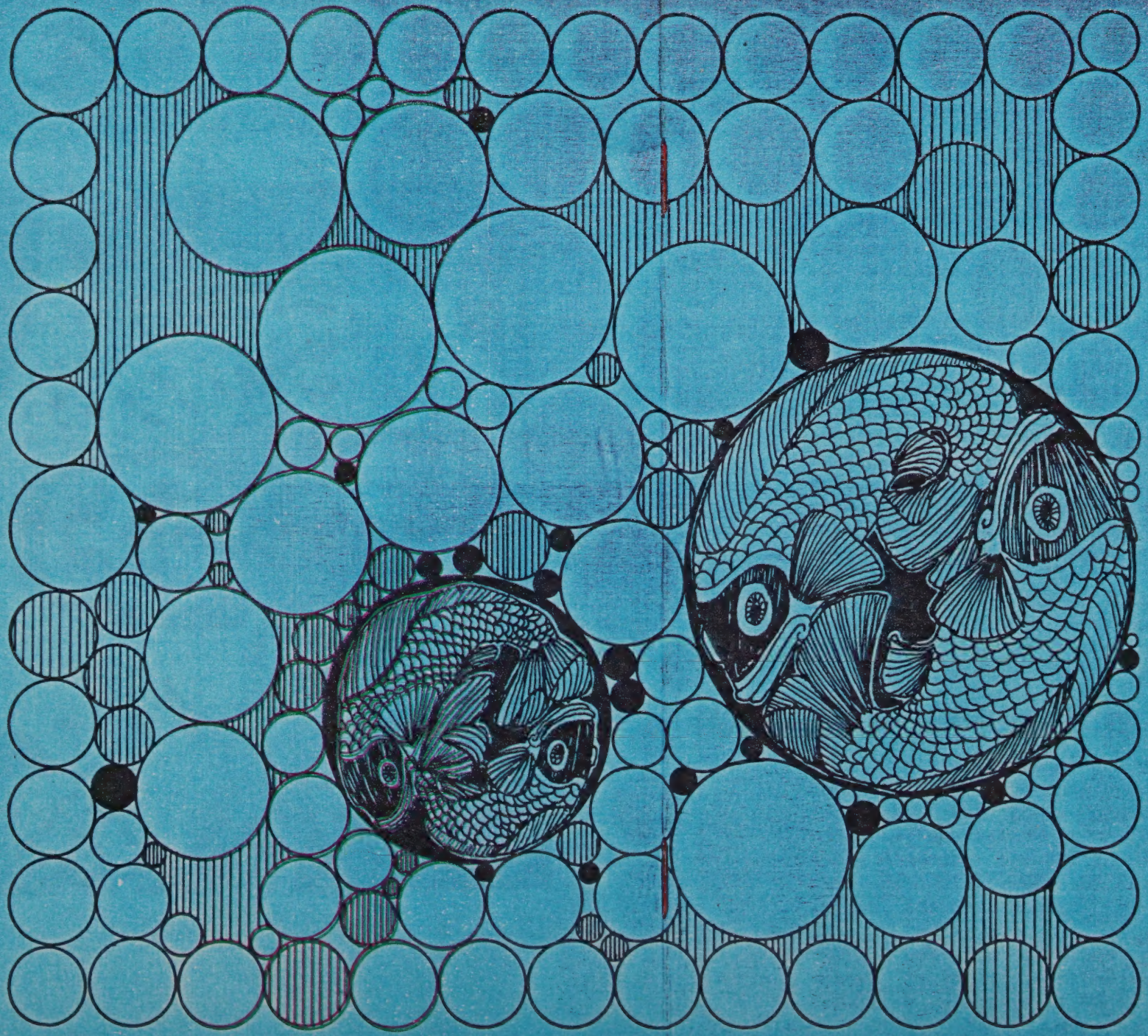

Under the Sign of Pisces

Anaïs Nin and her Circle

Fall
1974

MARGUERITE YOUNG
(PHOTO: JOAN SCHWARTZ)

Current Projects on the Work of Marguerite Young

I. WBAI radio station in New York will feature a series of programs on Marguerite Young.

1-a) For the first program Anais Nin has recorded an introduction to Marguerite Young's Miss MacIntosh, My Darling, taken from The Novel of the Future. She also read her original review of Marguerite Young's Angel in the Forest, and recounted anecdotes about their friendship.

Erika Duncan contributed her article on Marguerite Young, to be used as an introduction, "The Muse of Bleecker Street." Rob Noah Wynne, assistant director, coordinated technicians and scheduled recordings.

Marguerite Young was interviewed by Dr. Charles Ruas, director of the series. This interview, along with Anais Nin's reading and Erika Duncan's introduction, will form part one of the radio series, to be broadcast beginning in November.

1-b) This format was so successful, that the station is now planning a second program on Marguerite Young's Angel in the Forest, with an interview about the two Utopias in New Harmony, Indiana.

II. Readings from Miss MacIntosh, My Darling.

1-a) WBAI is programming a series of fourteen one hour readings to be continued from day to day over two weeks. Well-known professional actors will read the characters from the book. For example, Alice Playten, the OBIE winning comedienne of Lemmings, will read the frog muscian, Miss MacIntosh, and Mrs. Hogden.

1-b) A non-stop marathon reading of Miss MacIntosh, My Darling, is being considered by the committee in charge at WBAI. People from all the

arts in New York are being contacted to read a chapter apiece.

III. Erika Duncan, "Marguerite Young: The Muse of Bleecker Street," which includes a critical essay and an interview appeared in Changes, No. 89, October 1974.

Books in progress: Erika Duncan is presently at work on a critical study of the works of Marguerite Young. She is writing about the psychology of the characters, and the evolution of Marguerite Young's imagery and themes.

Joan Schwartz, video artist and photographer, is planning a photographic documentation of New Harmony, Indiana, using captions from Marguerite Young's study of the two Utopias once there, Angel in the Forest. She has been following the WBAI project at all stages, taking photographs for visual documentation for the proposed video program on Marguerite Young. This material will be published separately as a photographic essay. (See photograph on p. 2 of this issue.)

IV. Video project.

Charles Ruas is now working on a multi-media performance of Miss MacIntosh, My Darling, which will combine audio recordings,video taped performances, simultaneously with live performers. This applies the full potential of the visual media to present an interpretation of the text. The completed project is designed for television programs and distribution to educational institutions across the country.

V. Dissertation in progress: David Beams, English Department, Columbia University is completing his doctorial dissertation on Young and Iris Murdoch.

News from abroad: Marie-Claire Van der Elst, the translator of Nin's Diary into French,reports that

there are four French scholars writing theses on Miss MacIntosh, My Darling at the Sorbonne. Marie-Claire is working on the plans for the French translation of Miss MacIntosh, My Darling.

Miss MacIntosh, My Darling: The Reading Experience

Miss MacIntosh,My Darling is a psychological novel of epic sweep, written in a circular, liturgical style with each chapter complete in itself, and in turn, the chapters center around archetypal characters.Therefore, an interpretation of the novel which seizes upon the major characters such as the Opium Lady, Mr. Spitzer, Miss MacIntosh, Esther Longtree and others, contradicts the intention of the style and form in which it was written. These archetypes exist within the psyche of Vera Cartwheel, the narrator, whose total consciousness is being simulated by the style and form of the novel.

Marguerite Young's use of circular construction in imagistic prose demands attention in itself as an innovation in novelistic style and structure. The reader's awareness of the style enables him to perceive that these multiple voices and pluralistic levels of reality are the text of the novel itself. So all-encompassing is the reading experience that imaginative recreation of the text is only one of its facets. The reading experience presents a heightened state of awareness, four simultaneous levels of cognition. They are 1) The text itself, 2) The reader's recreation of the text, 3) The reader's sense of himself, 4) His idea of the author of the novel. The reader must remain in a place overviewing these four poles, for,in the reading experience he must grasp "The full circumference of the moment."

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